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ALARM *to the* LEGISLATURE

OF THE

Province of New-York, ^{State} ~~Colony~~ ^{of}OCCASIONED BY ^K ~~Gen~~ ^{Assembly}

The present Political Disturbances,

I N

N O R T H A M E R I C A :

A D D R E S S E D

To the Honourable Representatives

I N

G E N E R A L A S S E M B L Y

C O N V E N E D.

Salus populi suprema lex esto.

N E W - Y O R K :

Printed for JAMES RIVINGTON,

M,DCC,LXXV.

ALABAMA FOR LEGISLATURE

OF THE

Province of New York

DECEASED BY

The great Political Disfranchisement

IN

WORTH AMERICA

AND



To the

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

CONVENED

At the City of New York

Printed for James Livingston

1855



A N

A L A R M

T O T H E

LEGISLATURE, &c.

Honourable Gentlemen,

WHEN you reflect upon the present confused and distressed state of this, and the other colonies, I am persuaded, that you will think no apology necessary for the liberty I have taken, of addressing you on that subject. The unhappy contention we have entered into with our parent state, would inevitably be attended with many disagreeable circumstances, with many and great inconveniences to us, even were it conducted on our part, with *propriety* and *moderation*. What then must be the case, when all proper and moderate measures are *rejected*? When not even the *appearance* of decency is regarded? When nothing seems to be consulted, but how to perplex, irritate, and affront, the *British Ministry, Parliament, Nation and King*? When every scheme that tends to *peace*, is
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branded with *ignominy* ; as being the machination of slavery !
When nothing is called FREEDOM but SEDITION ! Nothing
LIBERTY but REBELLION !

I will not presume to encroach so far upon your time, as to attempt to point out the *causes* of our unnatural contention with *Great Britain*. You are well acquainted with them.—Nor will I attempt to trace out the *progress* of that *infatuation*, which hath so deeply, so miserably, infected the *Colonies*. You must have observed its rise, and noted its rapid growth. But I intreat your patience and candour, while I make some *observations* on the *conduct* of the *Colonies* in *general*, and of *this Colony* in *particular*, in the present dispute with our *mother country* : By which it will appear, that *most*, if not *all* the measures that have been adopted, have been *illegal* in their *beginning*, *tyrannical* in their *operation*,—and that they *must* be *ineffectual* in the *event*.

It is the happiness of the *British Government*, and of all the *British Colonies*, that the people have a right to share in the legislature. This right they exercise by choosing *representatives* ; and thereby constituting one branch of the legislative authority. But when they have chosen their representatives, that right, which was before diffused through the whole people, centers in their *Representatives alone* ; and can legally be exercised by *none but them*. They become the guardians of the lives, the liberties, the rights and properties, of the people : And as *they* are under the most sacred obligations to discharge their trust with *prudence* and *fidelity*, so the *people* are under the strongest obligations to treat them with *honour* and *respect* ; and to look to *them* for redress of all those grievances that they can justly complain of.

But in the present dispute with *Great Britain*, the *representatives of the people* have not only been *utterly disregarded*, but their *dignity* has been *trampled upon*, and their *authority contravened*.

A COMMITTEE, chosen in a *tumultuous*, *illegal* manner, usurped the most *despotic authority* over the *province*. They entered into contracts, compacts, combinations, treaties of alliance,

ance, with the other colonies, without any power from the legislature of the province. They agreed with the other Colonies to send Delegates to meet in convention at Philadelphia, to determine upon the *rights and liberties of the good people of this province*, unsupported by any Law. They issued notifications to the several supervisors through the colony, desiring them to *assemble the people*, in order to choose committees, to choose Delegates to represent them in the Congress. They directed, or encouraged, or abetted a *mob*, in perpetrating a crime, which the laws of the province forbid, under the severest penalty, viz: the robbing Captain Etherington, an Officer in his Majesty's service, of a number of *sheep*, which he had purchased, to carry with him to St. Vincent's. They had the *insolence* to direct the manner in which the Delegates should be chosen in the *counties*: And the *greater insolence*, to count all the *friends to order and good government*,—those namely, who did not choose to obey their seditious mandate,—as being of *their party*, and as acquiescing in the *New-York choice*.

When the Delegates had met at Philadelphia, instead of settling a reasonable plan of accommodation with the parent country, they employed themselves in censuring acts of the British parliament, which were principally intended to prevent *smuggling*, and all *illicit trade*;—in writing addresses to the people of *Great-Britain*, to the inhabitants of the *colonies in general*, and to those of the *province of Quebec*, in particular; with the evident design of making them *dissatisfied with their present government*; and of exciting *clamours*, and raising *seditions and rebellions* against the state;—and in exercising a *legislative authority over all the colonies*. They had the insolence to proclaim themselves “A FULL AND FREE REPRESENTATION OF” — “HIS MAJESTY'S FAITHFUL SUBJECTS IN ALL THE COLONIES FROM NOVA-SCOTIA TO GEORGIA;” and, as such, have laid a *tax* on all those colonies, viz. the *profits arising from the sales of all goods imported from Great-Britain, Ireland, &c.* during the months of December and January: Which *tax* is to be employed for the *relief of the Boston poor*. They adopted a *mad set of resolves*, framed by an *arch rebel*, who hath since *fled his country*, for fear of being apprehended, and imposed afterwards upon the deluded people of the county of *Suffolk* in the province of *Massachusetts-Bay*; approving their wisdom and fortitude, and recommending “a perseverance in the same firm” and

“and *temperate* conduct, as expressed in the” said resolves,---- notwithstanding those resolves entirely unhinged the *civil* government of that *province*, fomented a *spirit of dissatisfaction* to Great-Britain, and of rebellion against the *state*; and declared that the people of that county would not act always on the *defensive*, against the King’s troops.

I must beg leave to enumerate a few of the *effects* of the measures of the Congress.—The government of *Rhode-Island* have dismantled the fort in their harbour, and carried off the cannon, in order to employ them *against his Majesty’s forces*. The inhabitants of *New-Hampshire* have, under the command of Major SULLIVAN, one of the *Delegates*, attacked, and by *force of arms* taken a *fort* at *Portsmouth*, belonging to his Majesty, and carried off all the powder and small arms found in it. The people of *Maryland* have had a *provincial Congress* who have assessed that colony in the sum of £. 10,000, to be expended in arming and disciplining the inhabitants, to *fight against the King*. The people in *New-England* are raising, arming and disciplining men, for the same *loyal and christian* purpose. The people of *New-York* have, in obedience to the Congress, chosen a *new Committee*, consisting of no less than *sixty* persons; to ad, first, in the capacity of tax-gatherers, to collect the duties imposed by the Congress for the benefit of the *Boston poor*, by *distress and sale of the goods* imported during the last and the present month: and secondly, as *spies and informers*; to see that the non-importation, non-consumption, and non-exportation schemes, decreed by the Congress, be carried into *due execution*.

By the first of these schemes, we are in danger of being deprived of *many* of the *comforts*, and of *some* of the *necessaries* of life. We lie at the mercy of the merchants, who may strip us of *every farthing*, by demanding what *they* shall think *only a reasonable profit* on their goods. By the second, our very mode of living is made subject to their inspection; and we shall probably soon see these lordly Committee-men condescend to go *pimping*, and *peeping*, and *peering*, into tea-canisters and molasses jugs. By the third scheme, an *embargo* is to take place, after the tenth of September next, on all the *farmers produce* of EVERY KIND. So that should their whole plan be carried fully into execution, the laborious, necessary and numerous *body of FARMERS* would soon be reduced to distress and beggary.

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The state to which the GRAND CONGRESS, and the subordinate Committees, have reduced the colonies, is really deplorable. They have introduced a system of the most oppressive tyranny that can possibly be imagined;—a tyranny, not only over the actions, but over the words, thoughts, and wills, of the good people of this province. People have been threatned with the vengeance of a mob, for speaking in support of order and good government. Every method has been used to intimidate the printers from publishing any thing, which tended to peace, or seem'd in favour of government; while the most detestable libels against the King, the British parliament, and Ministry, have been eagerly read, and extravagantly commended, as the matchless productions of some heaven-born genius, glowing with the pure flame of civil liberty. They not only oblige people to pay the tax assessed on their goods for the benefit of the Boston poor, but they also oblige them to say, that they are willing to do it; when it is notorious, that many, if not most of them, would refuse if they dared.

Behold, Gentlemen, behold the wretched state to which we are reduced! A foreign power is brought in to govern this province. Laws made at Philadelphia, by factious men from New England, New-Jersey, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia, and the Carolinas, are imposed upon us by the most imperious menaces. Money is levied upon us without the consent of our representatives: which very money, under colour of relieving the poor people of Boston, it is too probable will be employed to raise an army against the King. Mobs and riots are encouraged, in order to force submission to the tyranny of the Congress. A very respectable gentleman, who serves his King in an honourable employment, has been threatened with ASSASSINATION, by the SONS OF LIBERTY, only for—doing his duty;—for securing a number of muskets, illegally imported, and which were intended to arm the people of New England against their lawful Sovereign.

To you, Gentlemen, the good people of this province look for relief: on you they have fixed their hopes: from you they expect deliverance from this intolerable state of slavery. They have chosen you to be the guardians of their rights and liberties. You have hitherto executed the important trust committed to you, with such fidelity and prudence, as entitle you to their most grateful acknowledgments, and encourage them to depend

pend upon you with the utmost confidence. They know well that all the *infidious arts* that evil-minded and *designing* men can possibly make use of, will be employed, to lead you away from that *rectitude of conduct*, which hath hitherto marked all your actions; and they anxiously wait the *issue of your deliberations*. If you assert your own dignity—If you maintain your own rights and privileges, we shall again be a free and happy, and, I trust, not an ungrateful people: but if you prostitute the dignity of your House;—if you betray the rights of your constituents, by confirming the decrees of the Congress;—you will thereby introduce a foreign power to govern and tax this province, and we shall be, of all men, the most wretched.---- If laws made, and decrees passed, at Philadelphia, by the enthusiastic republicans of New-England and Virginia, are to bind the people of this province, and extort money from them, why, Gentlemen, do you meet? Is it barely to register their edicts, and to rivet the fetters of their tyranny on your constituents? Your constituents, in that case, would be better without you. You would be an useless burthen upon them: worse than useless; a snare and a trap to them. Your duty requires you to interpose your authority, and to break up this horrid combination of seditious men, which has already enslaved this province; and which was intended to draw the faithful subjects of our most gracious Sovereign into REBELLION and a CIVIL WAR. The CONGRESS address themselves to the people of this province, among others, in the following words: “We think ourselves bound in duty to observe to you, that the schemes agitated against the colonies have been so conducted, as to render it prudent, that you should extend your views to mournful events, and be in all respects prepared for every contingency.” They had war in their hearts when this sentiment was conceived, and rebellion dictated the expression.

What, I beseech you, will be the consequence of pursuing the mode of conduct, which they have delineated? It will procure the redress of no one grievance we complain of. It will not intimidate the people of Great-Britain. We see no appearance of fear on their part; but every circumstance shews a settled design to assert the supremacy and vindicate the authority of the empire. The measures of the Congress will irritate them, but never can conciliate their affections. Should they in some degree distress their trade and manufactures, they will distress us much more

more *severely*. The schemes of the Congress will, from their very nature, operate but slowly against the government and people of Great-Britain; and before they can produce their full effect, the *present contention* will probably be settled. The *very next summer* will finish the dispute, either *peaceably*, or by *force of arms*. Should we oblige them to recur to this latter mode of acting, the *Parliament* will probably *make a constitution for us*, without consulting *our inclinations*; and force us to accept it, at the mouths of their cannon. Is it not better to make some *reasonable proposals*, to take *some prudent step towards an accommodation*, before matters come to this *dreadful extremity*? Suppose you do not; but adopt the *mad measures of the Congress*; or suffer them to proceed, and bring their *delirious machinations to effect*: The consequence will be, that you will establish the most ignominious, and *abominable tyranny* over your *constituents*, and over *yourselves*, that ever was invented. They have already made, and are now, by means of the *New-York Committee of sixty*, executing laws which *contra-vene your authority*. They are *levying money* on your *constituents*, without your consent. They have impudently *encroached* on the PRIVILEGES OF YOUR HOUSE, by dictating to your Agent, EDMUND BURKE, Esq; how he shall act in this dispute, without ever *asking your advice*, or waiting for *your opinion*†. Their *abettors and supporters* are frequently *insinuating the incapacity and inability* of the *Honourable House of Assembly*, to do any thing of *real consequence* towards settling this *unnatural contention*.

Now, if they treat the *Representatives* of the province in this disrespectful manner, what are the *people* to expect? We shall not dare to eat, or drink, or sleep, or act, or speak, or think, but in the precise mode which they shall direct. They have already regulated our trade and commerce, our manner of living, and our diversions; and, if their VINDICATOR is to be credited, the *next Congress* is to regulate our *courts of justice*.—Then will their tyranny be established; a tyranny of the most dreadful kind;—which *makes laws and executes them without check or controul*. Then will our happy constitution be destroyed, and a REPUBLIC be raised on its ruins. Then will You, Gentlemen, become an *useless body*; and it will be a matter of no consequence whether you ever meet again, or not.

† See their Letter to the Agents of the several Colonies. But here let it be remarked, That the *General Strictures* on the Congress, are far from being levelled against the *Delegates from New-York*; whose *pacific dispositions*, and *wise endeavours to accommodate*, tho' *unsuccessful*, ought not to be *unnoticed*.

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There is one consideration which, in particular, I must mention ; and which, I think, ought to have great weight with you, and with every person. The people in New-England have wrested the command of the MILITIA from their Governors, which they are diligently training, and forming for action. Whatever may be their *ostensible* reason, the *real* one undoubtedly is, to oppose the King's troops, and to support a rebellion against their Sovereign. The people of Maryland, and of the Lower Counties on Delaware, are following their example. The Pennsylvanians are calling together a Provincial Congress, to meet the 23d instant. They have taken this step even while their Assembly is sitting. But I wonder not at this : That Assembly, by approving, and, as far as their power extends, confirming the measures of the GRAND CONGRESS, have prostituted their own dignity, and betrayed the rights of their constituents ; and unless some superior power interposes, they will shortly find themselves absolutely controlled by these grand Continental, and petty Provincial CONGRESSES.

The design of the projectors of this provincial congress in Pennsylvania, is undoubtedly to concert a plan for embodying a militia, to act in concert with the New-Englanders, Marylanders, &c. Take care, Gentlemen, that this procedure does not spread, and infect *this* province by the contagion of its example ! I cannot conceive a worse state of thralldom, than a military power in any government, unchecked, and uncontrollable by the civil power. And this must be the case, with respect to a militia upon such an establishment as that of Maryland and New England. The laws of the congress, not the laws of the province, will be the rule of its conduct. Enthusiastic delegates, and brain-sick committee-men, will be its commanders ; and the friends of order and good government, the devoted victims of its power.

We have been taught to consider the colonies, as being of the utmost consequence to Great-Britain. We have been told that her very existence, as a sovereign state, depends upon them. Let us suppose this to be true. Let us also suppose that Great-Britain views the colonies in the same light that we do ; the consequence will be, that she will exert her utmost ability to retain them under her dominion. She will send every man, and every ship that she can spare, rather than suffer them

to be torn from her. A considerable army of British troops is already in America. All accounts from England agree in affirming that a larger body will be sent hither *early in the spring*.

Suppose our opposition to the British government should bring on a war, and that the power of Great-Britain, as is most probable, should prevail; will she immediately *recall* her troops? Will she subject herself to the expence of transporting *another* army to America, *a few years hence*? Will she not think it more prudent to keep a considerable military force in this country, to support the civil power, and to prevent the American republicans from throwing all into confusion again, that they may accomplish their rebellious purposes?

Suppose 20,000 men should be fixed upon an American establishment; who is to cloathe, feed and pay them? Great-Britain or the Colonies? By driving matters to extremity, we shall oblige Great-Britain to do the very thing that we are endeavouring, at least are *pretending* to endeavour, by our mad schemes, to *prevent*. We shall oblige her to raise a revenue upon us to support an army, to retain us in our dependance on her *imperial authority*.

If the *other* colonies run madly into such measures as must bring ruin upon them, are *we* obliged to imitate and follow them? If the people of New England will kindle a fire, and then rush into it, have we no way to shew our regard and affection for them, but to jump in after them? Let us rather keep out, that we may have it in our power to pull *them* out, before they are burnt to death. A little scorching I believe will not hurt them. It may do them good: it may make them dread the fire hereafter; for, like children, they seem incapable of learning from *any* experience but *their own*.

We, Gentlemen, have no alternative left, but either to join the other colonies in a *war* against Great-Britain, or to make the best terms that we can, for ourselves. The *former* may have the most *old Oliverian* glory in it, but the *latter* is certainly the most *prudent* course. It will save *this province*, and probably the *whole continent*, from *desolation and destruction*.

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On you, Gentlemen, it depends, under the good providence of Almighty God, whether this war meditated by the Congress, shall blaze out in America, or not. *All the Colonies in New-England, and some to the southward, have run head-long, under the influence of the Congress, into such measures, as evidently tend to a war against our mother-country, and our gracious Sovereign. This province, as yet, hath taken no decisive step. You have it in your power to establish it in peace and felicity; to secure it by a firm constitution; to make it the mediatrix with Great-Britain, for all the other Colonies, and to prevent the rage of slaughter, and the effusion of human blood.*

And now, I beseech you, as you ever have done, as the faithful representatives of the people; as the real guardians of their Rights and Liberties. Give them deliverance from the tyranny of the *Congress and Committees*: Secure them against the horrid carnage of a *civil war*: And endeavour to obtain for them
A FREE AND PERMANENT CONSTITUTION.

You know whether, and how far, the people of this province are aggrieved by any acts of the British Parliament; and we look to you to procure us *such* relief as you shall think *effectual*. We know of no representatives but *you*, whom we have legally chosen. On your wisdom and integrity we can rely. We have long known, and often tried you. From *you alone* we expect the means of redressing our grievances, and of guarding our happy form of government, against all *oppression* from *without*, and all *violence* and *insidious innovations* from *within*. From *you*, we expect some plan of accommodating our unhappy disputes with our mother country, and of preventing a renewal of them, by obtaining such a line of government as shall establish the *sovereign authority of Great-Britain* over all the *British dominions*, and at the same time secure the *rights and liberties of the Colonists*: And your *prudence* and *abilities* we know are *equal to the task*.

Be assured, Gentlemen, that a very great majority of your constituents disapprove of the late violent proceedings, and will support you in the pursuit of more *moderate measures*, as soon as You have *delivered Them* from the *tyranny of Committees*, from the *fear of violence*, and the *dread of mobs*. Recur boldly to your
 good

good, old, legal and successful way of proceeding, by *petition* and *remonstrance*.

Address yourselves to the *King* and the *two Houses of Parliament*. Let your representations be *decent* and *firm*, and principally directed to obtain a *solid American Constitution*; such as *we* can accept with *safety*, and *Great-Britain* can grant with *dignity*. Try the experiment, and you will assuredly find that our most gracious Sovereign and both Houses of Parliament will readily *meet* you in the *paths of peace*. Only shew your *willingness* towards an accommodation, by *acknowledging the supreme legislative authority of Great-Britain*, and I dare confidently pronounce the attainment of whatever you with *propriety*, can *ask*, and the LEGISLATURE OF GREAT-BRITAIN with *honour* concede.

New-York, January 17, 1775.

F I N I S.

The following Pamphlets, relating to the present Controversy between Great-Britain, and the Colonies, are to be had of

JAMES RIVINGTON,

Who, upon application to him, by Letters, Post paid, will immediately send orders completely executed to any part of America, and the West-Indies.

1 Free Thoughts on the Proceedings of the Continental Congress,

Held at Philadelphia, Sept. 5, 1774.

WHEREIN their Errors are exhibited, their Reasonings confuted; and the fatal Tendency of their Non-Importation, Non-Exportation, and Non-Consumption Measures, are laid open to the plainest Understandings: and the only Means pointed out for preserving and securing our present happy Constitution.

By the FARMER, A. W.

2 A full Vindication of the Measures of the Continental Congress:

IN ANSWER TO

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3 The Congress Canvassed :

OR,

An Examination into the Conduct of the Delegates,
At the Grand Continental Congress,
Addressed to the Merchants of New-York.

By the FARMER, A. W.

4 A Friendly Address to all Reasonable Americans,
On the Subject of Our Political Confusions.

5 The Other Side of the Question :

Or, A Defence of the Liberties of North-America.

IN Answer to a late Friendly Address to all Reasonable Americans, on the Subject of Our Political Confusions.

6 Strictures on A Pamphlet, entitled,

A "Friendly Address to all Reasonable Americans, on the Subject of our Political Confusions." Supposed to be Written by General Lee.



7 Considerations on the Nature and the Extent of
the Legislative Authority of the British Parliament.

8 The Causes of the present Distractions in America
explained.

9 Short Advice to the Counties of New-York.
By a COUNTRY GENTLEMAN.

10 Dr. Priestley's Address on Public Liberty in
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11 The Poor Man's Advice to his Poor Neighbours,
On the Publication of the Proceedings of the Congress,
A Ballad, to the Tune of Chevy-Chace.

12 A Dialogue between a Southern Delegate and his
Spouse, on his Return from
The GRAND CONTINENTAL CONGRESS.
Inscribed to the married Ladies of America.

13 In the Press, and Speedily will be Published,
What think ye of the CONGRESS Now?

O R,

An Enquiry how far the Americans are bound to
abide by, and execute the decisions of the late
Congress.

 Large allowance will be made to the Purchasers by the Do-
zen, of the above articles, to give away.

7- Considerations on the ... and the ... of the ...

8- The ... of the ... in ...

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10- Dr. ... Address on ... in ...

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12- A Dialogue between a ... and his ...

13- The ... of the ...

14- In the ...

15- An Enquiry into the ... and ... of the ...

16- ...

17- ...



